



## CONCEPT NOTE

# Roundtable 2: Post-crisis urban recovery

Monday, 2 October 2023

## Overview:

Aside from the heatwaves experienced this summer in multiple regions of the Northern Hemisphere, including southern Europe, this year has seen a record-high number of natural and climate-related disasters that affected cities and towns throughout the world. The magnitude 7.8 earthquake that struck southern and central Turkey and northern and western Syria on 6 February 2023 left 50,000 people dead in Türkiye alone (OCHA), and destroyed critical infrastructure and an estimated 100,000 buildings, obliging the relocation of some 3 million citizens.

During this year's monsoon season, China has seen unprecedented flash floods and typhoons battering the country, causing severe flooding and mudslides, and prompting the evacuation of more than a million people to safety. In early August, wildfires struck the Hawaiian island of Maui causing the widespread loss of life, properties and infrastructure.

On September 8, a devastating magnitude 6.8 earthquake hit Morocco, impacting the historic city of Marrakesh and hundreds of rural villages located near its epicentre in the High Atlas Mountains, in Al Haouz province (UNOSAT). Soon after, Storm Daniel hit northeastern Libya, where unprecedented flooding swept away large swathes of land and caused the collapse of two poorly-maintained dams that wrought havoc in the city of Derna and where the humanitarian toll of the disaster continues to mount.

These disasters have in most cases severely exacerbated high levels of pre-existing needs and vulnerabilities, damaging critical infrastructure that local authorities are

struggling to restore, and have most likely aggravated inequality between urban areas.

Similarly, on-going armed conflicts in countries such as Yemen, Libya and Ukraine have strained the capacity of national and local authorities and private sector to provide the investments and coordination necessary for reconstruction, ensure the safety of citizens and the stabilisation of the country's economy. With the support of its partners, UN-Habitat has actively engaged in area-based and integrated urban recovery, but also in the coordination of efforts, fostering collaboration between actors, leveraging expertise, mapping critical data and developing urban recovery frameworks.

While natural hazards, such as earthquakes, are inevitable, their impact on society is not. UN-Habitat has been advocating for safer building practices, supporting risk communication campaigns, investing risk reduction, and strengthening preparedness and resilience. After a man-made or natural disaster, protecting vulnerable individuals and ensuring access to their basic rights are immediate priorities. According to UNOCHA, "Gender inequality exacerbates the impact of disasters, and the impacts of disasters exacerbate gender inequality and vulnerability. Of particular concern are women-headed households, children, older persons and persons with disabilities who are disproportionately affected."

Post-crisis urban recovery is an essential facet of sustainable development, encompassing efforts to rebuild, rehabilitate, and redevelop cities and communities that

have been adversely affected by both conflicts and natural disasters. Whether stemming from armed conflicts or natural calamities, the aftermath of these events poses significant challenges to urban infrastructure, societal cohesion, and economic stability.

By promoting inclusivity, sustainability, and resilience, cities can be rebuilt to not only recover from the immediate aftermath but to thrive and withstand future challenges, contributing to a more stable and prosperous urban landscape.

Optimizing the usage of development funds as way of closing the global infrastructure gap is one of the key focus areas of this year's World Habitat Day in the Republic of Azerbaijan, a country that is a good reference for the design and establishment of new resilient urban economies, especially in the post-conflict reconstruction context.

## References

OCHA (2023). "Libya: Flood update Flash Update No.3 (16 September 2023)". Retrieved from ReliefWeb.int: <https://reliefweb.int/report/libya/libya-flood-update-flash-update-no3-16-september-2023-5pm-local-time>

OCHA (2023). "Türkiye: 2023 Earthquakes Situation Report No. 15, as of 20 April 2023". Retrieved from ReliefWeb.int: <https://reliefweb.int/report/turkiye/turkiye-2023-earthquakes-situation-report-no-15-20-april-2023-entr>

UN-Habitat (2002). Urban Recovery Framework publication series. Retrieved from: <https://unhabitat.org/urban-recovery-framework-publication-series>

UN-Habitat (2022). World Cities Report 2022. Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

## Proposed programme: Roundtable 01

**How can local authorities improve their capacity to respond to man-made and natural crises to ensure physical and governance resilience and long term sustainability of their actions?**

**Monday 2 October 2023, 16h00 - 17h20**

1. Welcome and opening remarks (15 mins)
2. Fire-starters (10 mins)
3. Facilitated roundtable discussion with Q&A (40 mins)
4. Example showcase from 2 cities (10 minutes each) (20 mins)
5. Closing remarks (5 mins)